The Damara School

Specialist SEMH Independent School

Examination Complaints Policy

Approved by: Trust Board	
Initial Ratification: 14 November 2024	**Review: November 2025, September 2026**
Next review due by: October 2028	

Key staff involved in the policy

Role	Name
Head of centre/SENDCO	Mrs Sandra Govender (CEO)
Exams officer	Mrs Julie Cox
SENDCO in training	Mrs Toni Mahler-Strzelecki
Chair of Trustees	Mrs Karen Hobley

Purpose of the policy

The purpose of this policy is to confirm the arrangements for complaints at The Damara School and confirms compliance with JCQ's General Regulations for Approved Centres 2026-2027 (5.3, 5.8) in drawing to the attention of candidates and their parents/carers our written complaints policy which covers general complaints regarding the centre's delivery or administration of a qualification and our internal appeals procedure.

Grounds for complaint

A candidate (or their/parent/carer) at The Damara School may make a complaint on the grounds below (This is not an exhaustive list).

Teaching and Learning

• Non-subject specialist teacher without adequate training/subject matter expertise utilised on a long-term basis

• Teacher lacking knowledge of new specification/incorrect core content studied/taught

• Core content not adequately covered

• Inadequate feedback for a candidate following assessment(s)

• Pre-release/advance material/set task issued by the awarding body not provided on time to an examination candidate

• The taking of an assessment, which contributes to the final grade of the qualification, not conducted according to the JCQ/awarding body instructions

• Candidate not informed of their centre assessed mark prior to marks being submitted to the awarding body

• Candidate not informed of their centre assessed mark in sufficient time to request/appeal a review of marking prior to marks being submitted to the awarding body

• Candidate not given sufficient time to review materials to make a decision whether to request a review of the centre assessed mark

• Candidate unhappy with internal assessment decision (complainant to refer to the centre's internal appeals procedure)

• Centre fails to adhere to its internal appeals procedure

• Additional grounds for complaint relating to teaching and learning: Not applicable

Access arrangements and special consideration

• Candidate not assessed by the centre's appointed assessor

• Candidate not involved in decisions made regarding their access arrangements

• Candidate did not consent to record their personal data online (by the non-acquisition of a completed candidate personal data consent form)

• Candidate not informed/adequately informed of the arrangement(s) in place and the subjects or components of subjects where the arrangement(s) would not apply

• Examination information not appropriately adapted for a disabled candidate to access it

• Adapted equipment/assistive technology put in place failed during examination/assessment

• Approved access arrangement(s) not put in place at the time of an examination/assessment

• Appropriate arrangement(s) not put in place at the time of an examination/assessment as a consequence of a temporary injury or impairment

• Candidate unhappy with centre decision relating to access arrangements or special consideration (complainant to refer to the centre's internal appeals procedure)

• Centre fails to adhere to its internal appeals procedure Additional grounds for complaint relating to access arrangements: Not applicable

Entries

• Failure to clearly explain a decision of early entry for a qualification to candidate (or parent/carer)

• Candidate not entered/entered late (incurring a late entry fee) for a required examination/assessment

• Candidate entered for a wrong examination/assessment

• Candidate entered for a wrong tier of entry

Additional grounds for complaint relating to examination entries: Not applicable

Conducting examinations

• Failure to adequately brief candidate on examination timetable/regulations prior to examination/assessment taking place

• Room in which assessment held did not provide candidate with appropriate conditions for taking the examination

• Inadequate invigilation in examination room

• Failure to conduct the examination according to the regulations

• Online system failed during (on-screen) examination/assessment

• Disruption during the examination/assessment

• Alleged, suspected or actual malpractice incident not investigated/reported

• If the candidate requests the outcome of a special consideration application, failure to inform/update the candidate of the outcome if provided by the awarding body

Additional grounds for complaint relating to the conducting of examinations: Not applicable

Results and Post-Results

• Before examinations, candidate not made aware of the arrangements for post-results services and the availability of senior members of centre staff after the publication of results

• Candidate not having access to a member of senior staff after the publication of results to discuss/make a decision on the submission of a results review/enquiry

• Candidate request for return of work after moderation and work not available/disposed of earlier than allowed in the regulations

• Candidate (or parent/carer) unhappy with a result (complainant to refer via exams officer to awarding body post-results services)

• Candidate (or parent/carer) unhappy with a centre decision not to support a clerical re-check, a review of marking, a review of moderation or an appeal (complainant to refer to the centre's internal appeals procedure)

• Centre fails to adhere to its internal appeals procedure

• Centre applied for the wrong post-results service/for the wrong script for a candidate

• Centre missed awarding body deadline to apply for a post-results service

• Centre applied for a post-results service for a candidate without gaining required candidate consent/permission

Additional grounds for complaint relating to results and post-results: Not applicable

Raising a concern/complaint

If a candidate (or parent/carer) has a general concern or complaint about the centre's delivery or administration of a qualification, The Damara School encourages an informal resolution in the first instance.

This can be undertaken by:

• raising the concern or complaint in person, by telephone or in writing to the Exams Officer

If a concern or complaint fails to be resolved informally, the candidate (or parent/carer) is then at liberty to make a formal complaint.

How to make a formal complaint

All documentation relating to the submission of a formal complaint is available from, and should be returned to:

• the Exams Officer (Mrs Julie Cox)

Formal complaints will be logged and acknowledged within:

• 5 working days (Note: Working days refers to Monday to Friday during term time, excluding bank holidays and school closure days)

To make a formal complaint, candidates (or parents/carers) must:

• complete and return a complaints form

How a formal complaint is investigated

The head of centre will further investigate or appoint a member of the senior leadership team (who is not involved in the grounds for complaint and has no personal interest in the outcome) to investigate the complaint and report on the findings and conclusion.

The findings and conclusion of any investigation will be provided to the complainant within:

• 2 working weeks

Internal appeals procedure

Following the outcome, if the complainant remains dissatisfied and believes there are clear grounds, an appeal can be submitted.

To submit an appeal, candidates (or parents/carers) must:

• follow the centre's internal appeals procedure and complete and return an internal appeals form

Appeals will be logged and acknowledged within:

• 5 working days

The appeal will be referred to:

• the Chair of Trustees (or a special committee of the Governing body) for consideration

It will be the responsibility of the Chair of Trustees (or Committee) to inform the appellant of the final conclusion in accordance with the internal appeals procedure.

Additional details on the internal appeals process: Not applicable.

This policy will be reviewed every **two years** or sooner if there are changes to JCQ regulations or awarding body requirements.